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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an examination of United States presidents' names as symbols. In developing the analysis, the paper: (1) reviews multiple perspectives which suggest that allusions to past presidents (such as Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, or Franklin Roosevelt) are significant political symbols; (2) discusses how allusions to past presidents function in specific situations such as ceremonies and political rallies; and (3) briefly explores the presidencies of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Ronald Reagan via presidential allusions. The paper observes that for each of the three men, allusions to other presidents occurred most frequently in ceremonial situations, and may have reflected attempts to shape societal values by providing a symbol of praiseworthy action. The paper concludes that the study adds one more layer of detail for understanding the presidency as well as American political culture. Sixty-four endnotes are included. (Author/SG)

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PRESIDENTS AS SYMBOLS:

AN INVESTIGATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY'S, LYNDON B. JOHNSON'S AND RONALD REAGAN'S USE OF PRESIDENTIAL ALLUSIONS

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ABSTRACT

PRESIDENTS AS SYMBOLS: AN INVESTIGATION OF JOHN F. KENNEDY'S, LYNDON B. JOHNSON'S, AND RONALD REAGAN'S USE OF PRESIDENTIAL ALLUSIONS

In developing this examination of presidential names as symbols, this paper (1) reviews multiple perspectives which suggest that allusions to past presidents are significant political symbols; (2) discusses how allusions to past presidents function in specific situations such as ceremonies and political rallies; and (3) briefly explores the presidencies of Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan via presidential allusions. This study adds one more layer of detail for understanding the presidency as well as American political culture.

> Woodrow Wilson once said in 1913, "What good is the success of a political party unless it's used by the nation for a great national purpose?" And I believe in the administration of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, and now today--the Democratic Party has a great national purpose, to move this country forward.[1]
>
> Thirty-one years ago this month Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed the policy of the good neighbor. Three years ago this month John Kennedy called for an Alliance for Progress among the American Republics. Today my country rededicates itself to these principles and renews its commitment to the partnership of the hemisphere to carry them forward.[2]
>
> Now, you hear a lot of jokes every once in a while about silent Cal Coolidge. But I think the joke is on the people that make jokes, because if you look at his record, he cut the taxes four times. We had probably the greatest growth in prosperity that we've ever known. And I have taken heed of that, because if he did that by doing nothing, maybe that's the answer that the Federal Government better--[3]

In each of the preceding passages, Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan invoked the names of prior presidents in the service of their own personal and administrative goals. What is the purpose of a president using the name or words of earlier presidents for a presidency differing in time periods, problems, and sometimes partisan affiliation? In this paper, I shall investigate the symbolic use of former presidents by Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan. Presidential names may be important as symbols for a president in establishing a sense of self as president and in communicating an image of his presidency to the public. While focusing on presidential names involves examining very small details rather than larger concepts such as presidency, political culture, and American culture, that micro-study may provide valuable information enhancing our understanding of the larger structures. As Clifford Geertz contends in concluding "Notes on the Balinese Cockfight", "[a]s in more familiar exercises in close reading, one can start anywhere in a culture's repertoire of forms and end up anywhere else. One can stay, as I have here, within a single, more or less bounded form, and circle steadily within it. One can move between forms in search of broader unities or informing contrasts. ... But whatever the level at which one operates, and however intricately, the guiding principle is the same: societies, like lives,

contain their own interpretations. One has only to learn how to gain access to them."[4]

In developing this examination of presidential names as symbols, I shall: (1) review perspectives which suggest that allusions to past presidents are significant political symbols; (2) discuss how allusions to past presidents function symbolically in certain contexts; and (3) briefly explore the presidencies of Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan via their use of presidential names. In his provocative study Sugar Creek, John Mack Faragher argues "it is the layering of detail, the interrelation of subjects, and the mingling of abstract structure with conjecture, that make up the gestalt of historical interpretation."[5] With this study, we potentially add one more layer of detail for understanding the presidency, political culture, and American culture.

In focusing on Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan as subjects for this study, I am not claiming that their three presidencies are representative of all presidents or are fundamentally similar to each other. Rather these three men provide an intriguing combination for understanding the symbolic use of presidential names. Almost immediately after his assassination, John F. Kennedy became a mythic president. In describing his own role in creating the myth, Theodore H. White claims "[s]o the epitaph on the Kennedy administration became Camelot--a magic moment in American history, when gallant men danced with beautiful women, when great deeds were done, when artists, writers and poets met at the White House, and the barbarians beyond the walls were held back."[6] Lyndon B. Johnson, the Texan from the Hill Country and Southwest Texas Teachers College, became the standard bearer for the mythic Kennedy. While Kennedy and Johnson represent contrasts within the same party, Ronald Reagan, the conservative Republican, apparently appropriates Democratic myths of FDR and JFK to justify dismantling their programs. In a very real sense, Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan are linked symbolically and programmatically. Additionally, Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan utilize presidential names more frequently than any of the other post-FDR presidents[7]. By studying these

three very different presidents, we enhance our understanding of how presidential names function symbolically within the institution of the presidency as well as with the three individuals.

Presidents as Symbols. While there has been no systematic study of allusions to past presidents as symbols for later presidents or publics, a variety of sources suggest the symbolic importance of presidents. Intuitively, former presidents seem important in understanding the presidency since most people develop their conception of the presidency from personal experience or images, family recollections, media representations, and educational indoctrination of the presidency as a person or a collection of very special individuals. For instance in describing the concept of a public presidency, political scientist George Edwards contends, "[h]igh expectations of presidents are also supported by our political socialization; we are often taught American history organized by presidential era. Implicit in much of this teaching is the view that great presidents were largely responsible for the freedom and prosperity Americans enjoy."[8] With this perspective, presidential names or images, for the public and for a newly elected president, provide an understanding of the presidency as an institution.

Additionally, presidential statements on the relationship between an incumbent president and previous presidents suggest the influence of the past on the present. For instance, Lyndon Johnson claimed, "there is an unseen Presidency. Its tradition, experience, judgment, and example speak across the centuries from one President to the next."[9] In 1932 Herbert Hoover reflected a similar concern with, "No man can be President without looking back upon the effort given to the country by the thirty Presidents who in my case have preceded me. No man of imagination can be President without thinking of what shall be the course of his country under the thirty more Presidents who will follow him. He must think of himself as a link in the long chain of his country's destiny, past and future."[10] While these are isolated statements, presidents, at some level, identify with the presidents before them in creating their own presidency.

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By emphasizing the mythic power of strong presidents, writers assume the influence of the historical presidency on an incumbent president. For example, "He sits in Lincoln's chair, and he speaks with the moral authority of Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, and Roosevelt. People attribute something of the luster, virtue, and competence of those giants to any president. He absorbs their colors, and this cannot help but have a significant impact on how other people relate to him."[11] In a similar vein, "Washington the spotless patriot, Jefferson the democrat, Jackson the man of the frontier, Lincoln the emancipator and preserver of the Union, Theodore Roosevelt the All-American Boy, Wilson the peacemaker - these men are symbols of huge interest and value to the American people."[12] With these statements Clinton Rossitor illustrates the position that past presidents influence occupants of the office as well as the American people's perception of each Chief of State.

Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt are frequently discussed as powerful influences on later presidents. While claims such as "Lincoln is the supreme myth, the richest symbol in the American experience."[13] may be hyperbole, such statements are not uncommon. For instance, Richard Current argues that Lincoln is the favorite president for later presidents to quote or recall. He also contends, "[w]hatever the immediate concern, when the presidents cite Lincoln they tell us something about the presidency and about political leadership both in their time and in his."[14] FDR is also considered a "tough act to follow. In his more than three terms in the White House, he had become, as one writer has stated 'the Paul Bunyan of American Presidents: a myth based on vividly remembered reality'."[15] For presidents and publics, the name and images associated with FDR cast a powerful shadow on the modern presidency.[16] With their investigations of incumbent presidents' relationships with Lincoln and FDR, Current and Leuchtenburg suggest the symbolic potency of past presidents for their successors.

In a variety of contexts, scholars present concepts which suggest the symbolic nature of presidents. While Novak does not specifically investigate the use of names as symbols, he does focus on the symbolic nature of the

presidency.[17] Daniel Boorstin argues, "[o]ur feeling of continuity in our history makes it easy for us to see the founding fathers as our contemporaries. It induces us to draw heavily on the materials of our history, but always in a distinctly nonhistorical frame of mind."[18] By separating names from specific historical context, people can use the names for different symbolic purposes. Discussions focusing on the reification of national meaning in "hero-presidents" and constituting the presidency through the "words and deeds of individual presidents" also provide support for the significance of presidential names as symbols.[19]

In investigating presidential allusions as symbols, we must consider what function the names serve for the presidents using them. For instance, the public may use the images associated with past presidents in making political judgments. In his study of the symbolic uses of George Washington, Barry Schwartz contends, "the memory of Washington's character keeps alive the ideals of the past. For the mature American, that memory embodies a clear standard for political judgment; for the young, an effective tool of moral instruction."[20] Studies from an empirical perspective also suggest that "particularly heroic examples of presidents past" may function as standards for judgment of contemporary presidents.[21]

As indicated by Schwartz above, references to previous presidents may assist a president and his audience in conserving the past and in establishing a link between past and present. In their examination of presidential inaugurals, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson argue, "[t]o demonstrate his qualifications for the office, the President must venerate the past and show that the traditions of the institution continue unbroken in him. He must affirm that he will transmit the institution of the Presidency intact to his successors." One avenue for achieving these goals is by honoring past presidents.[22] Schwartz specifically suggests that the commemoration of Washington is "more of a way of understanding the present that of understanding the past. It is also an instrument for articulating the continuity of present and past."[23] With their studies, these authors

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illustrate specific rhetorical functions for presidential names.

Presidential names may also function as legitimating symbols. According to William Leuchtenburg, Kennedy used FDR as a legitimating force for his policies.[24]Marcus Cunliffe argues that Andrew Jackson is considered the "vigorous democratic ruler" who is cited by strong Presidents as a model or justification for their actions.[25] Current contends that Lincoln is also utilized as a source of "political support and for official precedents."[26] In this context, FDR, Jackson, and Lincoln as names with associated images become persuasive tools for succeeding presidents.

In addition to functioning for the public, presidential names also serve as symbols for an incumbent president. As a political figure, a president has an identity as a "political self" which "refers to an individual's view of oneself in the single-role of political actor or one's package of orientations regarding politics."[27] In his examination of "becoming" president, Robert Denton contends that: "The eventual 'Presidential self' includes all the subjective thoughts, feelings, and needs which are associated with the role."[28] Perhaps in the process of adapting self to the presidency, a primary source for understanding the presidency is earlier presidents. After all individuals who become president go through essentially the same political socialization and education process that all other Americans experience: a process which emphasizes individual presidents. Additionally, when a person wakes up and finds that he or she is "leader of the free world", he or she is most likely to identify himself or herself with those few other individuals who shared the same experience. For instance, Current argues that the "Lincoln Presidents" sought reassurance from their notions of how Lincoln would respond.[29] Perhaps Lyndon Johnson describes himself more so than Abraham Lincoln when he said: "Lincoln was often racked by doubts. In the conduct of grave human affairs, dogmatic certainty is often the handmaiden of catastrophe. But doubts can lead to disaster too--paralyzing the will when the times cry out for action. The true quality of Lincoln emerges, I think, from the fact that for four long brutal years he never permitted his anguish

and doubt to ever deter him from acting."[30] In other words, past presidents function not only in communicating ideas to the public but in defining an individual as president.

Essentially, a presidential name may function as a "condensation symbol" which "is a name, word, phrase, or maxim which stirs vivid impressions involving the listener's most basic values. The symbol arouses and readies him for mental or physical action."[31] Given the various fragments which indicate the symbolic importance of presidential names, we turn to an investigation of these symbols.

Presidential Names and Value Maintenance. As symbols, presidential allusions may function in rhetorical discourse to "inculcate, affirm, and maintain publicly shared values."[32] By examining the two dominant situations where presidential names occur, we see how presidential names function in value education and maintenance.

For Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan presidential allusions occur most frequently in ceremonial situations[33]. These ceremonial situations include occasions such as an Inaugural Address, presenting the Medal of Freedom, toasting various dignitaries, and bill signing events as well as many other, frequently mundane, situations in which presidents frequently find themselves. One perspective would label many of these situations epideictic speech. In epideictic, speakers attempt to "increase the intensity of adherence to values held in common by the audience and speaker."[34] Potentially by using the presidential names, presidents are shaping societal values by providing a symbol of good or praise-worthy actions.

In a multiplicity of instances, Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan indicate the value dimension of presidential names. Holding up names as value symbols is easily apparent in Ronald Reagan's first inaugural address.

> At the end of this open mall are those shrines to the giants on whose shoulders we stand. Directly in front of me, the monument to a monumental man, George Washington, father of our country. A man of humility who came to greatness reluctantly. He led

> American out of revolutionary victory into infant nationhood. Off to one side, the stately memorial to Thomas Jefferson. The Declaration of Independence flames with his eloquence. And then, beyond the Reflecting Pool, the dignified columns of the Lincoln Memorial. Whoever would understand in his heart the meaning of American will find it in the life of Abraham Lincoln.[35]

In similar manner, but perhaps on a less grand occasion, LBJ illustrates the value function of previous presidents with: "Thomas Jefferson said: 'When a man assumes a public trust, he should consider himself as public property.' The man we honor here today has lived that philosophy for more than 7 long years."[36] In a seemingly inconsequential occasion, Kennedy invokes the image of George Washington when toasting the President of Tunisia. "...in many ways his own life is comparable to the experiences of the father of our country, General Washington. Like President Washington, President Bourguiba is a revolutionary, and like President Washington he also, when the revolution was won, had the sense of judgment, self-discipline and strength to attempt to bring good will and peace among his people and to the people of the former occupiers of his country and his surrounding neighbors."[37]

In each of the examples, the presidents present the name of a former president and explicate values associated with that name. While these are isolated instances, presidents are constantly toasting, presenting, remarking, etc. and, at least with Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan, calling on presidential names. Apparently, Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan accept Schwartz's contention that "George Washington remains a prominent object of commemoration because the values he stood for in the late eighteenth century remain central to the political culture of the late twentieth century."[38]

In addition to ceremonies, presidential allusions occur frequently in political situations. While presidents are theoretically the representative of all the people, they are also the leading spokespersons of a political party. In examining the symbolic nature of presidential names and the usage of those names by incumbent presidents, we cannot ignore the fundamentally

partisan nature of the American presidency. In many ways presidential names, function as a type of political capital which rightly "belongs" to appropriate heirs. For instance, in the 1980 election Democrats, particularly Carter, were enraged and stunned by Ronald Reagan's habit of using FDR in support of his conservative cause. For most people, particularly Democrats, FDR is viewed as a symbol of active and expanding government concerned with social welfare.[39] As a campaign symbol, FDR does not, at least from most Democrats' perspective, represent the campaign or the presidency of Ronald Reagan. In using presidential names in political situations, the presidents illustrate how the names function in defining partisan as well as general American values.

John F. Kennedy explicitly recognizes the political role of president with: "A President of the United States, as Harry Truman has said, wears many hats, as Commander in Chief, as President, holding special responsibilities in the field of foreign policy. But he is also the leader of his party." In the same speech, Kennedy goes on to associate himself and all Democrats with the preeminent historical Democrats: "I'm proud to be a Democrat. I'm proud of the record we have tried to make. I'm proud to be in the long line of succession as a leader of the oldest political party on earth, from Jefferson to Jackson to Truman and Roosevelt and Wilson." Additionally, Kennedy uses presidential names to move the audience to action with: "Are we going to say in 1962 that Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman did their job and we're not going to do ours? I come to Pennsylvania and I ask you for your support in electing Democratic Congressmen who believe in progress, and Senators and electing a great Governor."[40] While Kennedy's remarks are all too familiar by invoking "great" Democrats, he quickly and, potentially, effectively states his position. For Kennedy, his Democrat predecessors provide an easily understandable and perhaps potent rhetorical strategy.

Throughout his presidency, Lyndon Johnson evoked the myth of John F. Kennedy as his own political capital. For instance:

One day in August, about 6 years ago, I joined in a compact in Los

> Angeles with John Fitzgerald Kennedy to offer the people of this Nation a program of better jobs and more jobs at better wages, better living, better health, better education, a program to fight poverty at home and abroad, a program of conservation and beautification and recreation so we could have better living for our families. ... We stood shoulder to shoulder in that program. When others were divided, we stood together. The effort we began, the pledges we made, we carried out together, as long as God spared John F. Kennedy. And since he was taken from us, I have tried in good faith to carry on. Those pledges have been redeemed.[41]

For Lyndon Johnson, John F. Kennedy legitimated virtually every policy and action of the Johnson presidency. In this instance and the hundreds of others similar ones (in his time as president Johnson mentioned Kennedy at least once in 248 political situations), Johnson associated himself with the values and the legacy of the mythic Kennedy for his own political gain.

As indicated earlier, Ronald Reagan does not limit himself to only Republican symbols. For example, at a Republican rally Reagan states:

> Franklin Roosevelt warned that fear can paralyze us. Let us turn away from voices of fear and doom, and move forward together to embrace recovery with confidence and courage. Those who make our country sick, however their intentions, must not keep her from getting well now. Partisan politics must not delay the healing of America. If others cannot encourage, pitch in, and help the rest of us, then let them stand aside and get out of the way. This nation wants to move forward.[42]

By invoking FDR in support of his actions, Reagan appropriates and redefines important Democratic capital. While for many people FDR and the Democratic party were inherently connected, that linkage may have weakened with time and lack of specific references. When Reagan associates himself with the values of FDR, he potentially reaches an audience which allows him to define the FDR

symbol for them in a manner consistent with Reagan's conservative goals. Perhaps Democrats are justified in their rage and concern. After all, they may be losing their stronghold on one of the most powerful symbols of the modern Democratic party and presidency.

When asked what do you want in a president, respondents have identified honesty, intelligence, and independence as the primary characteristics.[43] Perhaps presidents and aspiring candidates believe they can project those qualities by calling upon the individuals who exhibited the characteristics in the past. While presidential names may communicate values which presidents wish to be associated with, Jimmy Carter's experience should perhaps serve as a warning. Of the 252 Carter speeches containing allusions, 156 were in an election with 96 of those being in the 1980 presidential year. In those 96 speeches, Carter invoked John F. Kennedy 127 times, Franklin Roosevelt 121 times, and Harry Truman 100 times. Carter's 1980 use of allusions contrasts to 1977 when he evoked JFK 14 times, FDR and Harry Truman seven times. Clearly, Jimmy Carter conceives of presidential allusions as a political resource. Perhaps, Carter also indicates the need for caution, consistency, and appropriateness in using those symbols. Potentially, since Carter's use of presidential names was so abrupt and almost out of character in 1980, audiences did not accept the transference of the symbols.[44]

With their use of presidential allusions, Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan illustrate how the names function as symbols which are important in creating and maintaining societal and partisan values. From this general discussion, we can now move into an examination of each presidency via presidential names.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy[1]. With his use of presidential names, JFK projected an image of his presidency as active, inherently Democratic, and traditionally patriotic. For instance, in his speeches Kennedy called upon 22

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[1] Kennedy had 230 speeches containing 624 allusions to past presidents. Of those 624 allusions 121 were to FDR; 103 to Eisenhower; 76 to Truman; 65 to Jefferson; 54 to Wilson; 41 to T. Roosevelt; 35 to Washington; and 35 to Lincoln. Other presidents mentioned by Kennedy were Adams, Hoover, J.Q. Adams, Jackson, Coolidge, Madison, Cleveland, Monroe, McKinley, Taft, Harding, Fillmore, A.Johnson, and Grant.

past presidents from the 34 available to him. He most frequently mentioned FDR with Eisenhower second and Harry Truman third. Thomas Jefferson, Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, and George Washington were the next more frequently invoked in Kennedy's speeches. As indicated earlier, Kennedy's presidential allusions occurred most frequently in ceremonial situations with political occasions as the second highest. While the Eisenhower references do not fit specifically into an image of the Kennedy presidency, those references usually occurred in press conferences, often from press initiation rather than Kennedy's own choice. For instance:

> Q. Mr. President, almost precisely a year ago, President Eisenhower in his farewell address discussed the influence of the military-industrial alliance in the defense spending program. I wonder, sir, if, in your first year in office, you have developed similar concern for this problem.
>
> THE PRESIDENT. I think that President Eisenhower commented on a matter which deserves continuing attention by the President and also by the Secretary of Defense. There gets to be a great vested interest in expenditures because of the employment that is involved, and all the rest, and that's one of the struggles which he had and which we have, and I think his warning or words were well taken.[45]

In discussing the symbolic nature of presidential names, we must also realize that not every occurrence of the name is necessarily symbolic in terms of values or images for a presidency as the Eisenhower example illustrates.

For John F. Kennedy, Franklin Roosevelt provided an all purpose example. Kennedy used FDR in a multiplicity of situations ranging from greeting dignitaries, making statements on his arrival in foreign countries, and associating himself with causes and audiences. For instance, in talking to a conference on conservation:

> And this is particularly challenging now when so many changes are taking place, in the method of living, of transportation, in the

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> lives of all of us, so that we have the same opportunity, the same challenge, the same necessities as faced Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt way back when they turned their attention to it."

Or, as an additional example, speaking to students at the University of Costa Rica:

> What Franklin Roosevelt said to the American people in the 1930's I say to you now: This generation of Americans, your generation of Americans, has a rendezvous with destiny."

Regardless of audience or topic, John F. Kennedy found that FDR could effectively speak for him.

While Kennedy frequently called upon Theodore Roosevelt, he usually did so in conjunction with other past presidents and as a means of identifying with a specific group or cause. For instance with the conservation example, Kennedy uses Theodore Roosevelt in conjunction with other presidents for associating himself with the cause perhaps most associated with Theodore Roosevelt. Additionally, Teddy Roosevelt's "rough rider" and "bully pulpit" memory may also enhance the active image of Kennedy's presidency.

While current memories of John F. Kennedy may not highlight his intense partisan nature, his use of presidential names suggests it. Of Kennedy's five most frequently mentioned presidents, four are Democrats (the three immediately preceding him and "founder" of the party--Jefferson). These presidential names occur both in ceremonial and political situations and frequently in combination. For example:

> We can keep going by not merely invoking the past, but by using the past as a stimulus to the future, and all of the great leaders of the Democratic Party -- Wilson's New Freedom, Roosevelt's New Deal, Truman's Fair Deal, and our New Frontier -- are attempts to pick up the United States and move it."

While the associations are not subtle, Kennedy clearly calls upon the values and images associated with the past in order to advance his own goals.

With his use of Lincoln and Washington, Kennedy remembers and honors the past in a rather traditional manner. For instance, at the 10th Annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast, Kennedy said that:

> In our program this morning there is a quotation from Lincoln which I think is particularly applicable today. He said, "I believe there is a God. I see the storm coming and I believe He has a hand in it. If He has a part and place for me, I believe that I am ready."
>
> We see the storm coming, and we believe He has a hand in it, and if He has a place and a part for us, I believe that we are ready.[49]

With the Lincoln quotation, Kennedy identifies himself with the occasion without associating himself with specific religious doctrines.

In his remarks at George Washington University, Kennedy praises his audience by associating the ideals of higher education with a "great" president. Kennedy stated that:

> I am also glad to be here because this University bears the distinguished name of the father of our country, George Washington. It is a matter of great interest that there has been an intimate relationship between the great political leaders of our country and our colleges and universities.
>
> This University bears the name of George Washington, which showed his understanding in his day of the necessity of a free society to produce educated men and women.[50]

Essentially, Kennedy used Lincoln and Washington as symbols of basic American values without overt partisan undertones applicable for a variety of situations and audiences.

By examining Kennedy's use of presidential allusions, we see many familiar images of the Kennedy presidency but through a different lens. The mythic Camelot presidency is not apparent in the everyday discourse or in some special pattern of symbol use. Instead, Kennedy's presidency appears active,

almost partisan, and somewhat traditional. In many ways, Kennedy's use of presidential names may represent a norm or balance. Kennedy was not influenced or preoccupied with any one prior president and did not mention any president that would seem odd, surprising, or contradictory with his political positions. In this respect, Kennedy differs dramatically with Lyndon B. Johnson and Ronald Reagan.

Lyndon B. Johnson[2]. Lyndon Johnson's use of presidential names represents a marked contrast from the Kennedy presidency. Essentially, Johnson defines himself as president and his presidency through past presidents since he presents himself as the standard bearer for the deceased Kennedy and true son of the Roosevelt legacy. In his autobiography, whether as perpetuation of an image or as deeply held beliefs, Johnson states:

> Rightly or wrongly, I felt from the very first day in office that I had to carry on for President Kennedy. I considered myself the caretaker of both his people and his policies. He knew when he selected me as his running mate that I would be the man required to carry on if anything happened to him. I did what I believed he would have wanted me to do. I never wavered from that sense of responsibility, even after I was elected in my own right, up to my last day in office.[51]

Leuchtenburg comments on LBJ's relationship with FDR with:

> To the very last he remained a Roosevelt man, committed to social reform and a bold foreign policy. Yet he also wanted to put his own brand on the history of his times, indeed to achieve so much that he would outrank even FDR.[52]

Perhaps, Lyndon B. Johnson is best understood as a president trapped by the past.

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[2] Lyndon Johnson gave 602 speeches containing 1917 allusions. Of those allusions 521 were to JFK; 267 to FDR; 252 to Eisenhower; 227 to Truman; 204 to Lincoln; 110 to Jefferson; 64 to Wilson; 53 to T. Roosevelt, 48 to Washington; 45 to Hoover; and 44 to Jackson. Other past presidents mentioned by LBJ were A.Johnson, Madison, Adams, Coolidge, Taft, Garfield, Cleveland, Polk, Harding, Monroe, Grant, J.Q. Adams, and Buchanan.

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By examining presidential names, we see Johnson's focus on Kennedy and FDR as well as the still living former presidents Eisenhower and Truman. For Johnson, Kennedy functioned as a legitimating symbol for his own presidency and as a powerful campaign strategy to guarantee Johnson's own election. In the period immediately after he wa sworn in as president and throughout the 1964 election campaign, Johnson invoked John F. Kennedy in 166 speaking situations. For instance, in a campaign speech Johnson repeatedly referred to Kennedy as "our beloved President", described himself as "carrying on for John Fitzgerald Kennedy", reminded the audience of the assassination night with "[t]hat night I returned to that empty White House, that room that was vacant because our leader had fallen," and listed the "program" "our beloved President" had for America. Johnson then goes on to state:

> I counted those bills. President Kennedy, when he was taken from us, had 51 major measures for the people, p-e-e-p-l-e, p-e-e-p-u-l[sic]. I mean the great mass of human nature that make up 190 million, and they have one leader. The just have one President. I am the only President you have.[53]

While 1963-1964 has approximately half of Johnson's mentions of Kennedy, throughout his presidency Johnson continued to describe himself and his presidency with frequent references to Kennedy.

In addition to continuing Kennedy's policies, Johnson also identified himself and his programs with Franklin Roosevelt. For example in his first address to United Nations as President, Johnson emphasized his association with FDR. Johnson stated that:

> When I entered the Congress of the United States 27 years ago, it way my very great privilege to work closely with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. As a member of Congress, I worked with him to bring about a profound but peaceful revolution. That peaceful revolution brought help and hope to the one-third of our Nation that was then "ill-housed, ill-clad, and ill-nourished." We helped our working men and women obtain more jobs and we helped

them obtain better wages. We helped our farmers to buy and improve their own land, and conserve their soil and water, and electrify their farms.[54]

In this example and numerous others, Johnson identifies himself explicitly with FDR programs and claims for himself part of the credit awarded to FDR and those programs.

While Johnson frequently mentioned Eisenhower, many of those references came during press conferences and in the 1964 election comparing the Kennedy/Johnson administration against the Eisenhower presidency. Yet LBJ insisted throughout his term that his actions in Vietnam were consisted with Eisenhower's and Kennedy's. For example Johnson stated that:

> That is what President Eisenhower remembered in 1954 when he laid before the Senate the SEATO Treaty, and during the crisis over Quemoy and Matsu.
>
> That is what President John F. Kennedy remembered when, in the face of Communist aggression in Laos and Vietnam, he began to send American forces there as early as 1962.
>
> Yes, we have learned over the past half century that failure to meet aggression means war, not peace.[55]

In an examination of the Johnson/Eisenhower relationship, H. W. Brandis argues that LBJ believed he was acting in Vietnam as Eisenhower would have acted.[56] In other words, Vietnam was not Johnson's war nor was it the Democrats' war.

Early in his memoir, Lyndon Johnson states that:

> Every President has to establish with the various sectors of the country what I call "the right to govern." Just being elected to the office does not guarantee him that right. Every President has to inspire the confidence of the people. Every President has to become a leader, and tc be a leader he must attract people who are willing to follow him. Every President has to develop a moral underpinning to his power, or he soon discovers that he has no

power at all.

For me, that presented special problems.[57]

By investigating Johnson's use of presidential names, we see one avenue Johnson choose to establish his "right to govern." Johnson, perhaps unconsciously, describes his preoccupation with establishing his legitimacy as a ruler and potentially provides an explanation for his frequent use of JFK, FDR, and the other presidential names.

Ronald Reagan[3]. Ronald Reagan's relationship with FDR is described as "baffling, labyrinthine," and characterized by Reagan signing the legislation establishing a garden wall monument in honor of FDR but providing no appropriations for the building of the wall.[58] In many ways, this description of Reagan and FDR illustrates Reagan use of presidential allusions as symbols. Reagan's use of presidential allusions is characterized by four patterns evident from the names and the frequency of mentions. First, with his extensive use of the powerful but normally Democratic symbols--JFK and FDR, Reagan coopts ground of his opponents in representing his presidency to the public. For instance, Reagan frequently compares his budget to JFK's in terms of percentage devoted to military spending and invokes JFK in support of his tax cut. In a White House Briefing, Reagan contended that:

> John F. Kennedy proposed a broad, across-the-board income tax cut over a 2 year period, and it was implemented after he was gone. But the economists were rising up and telling him that this was going to reduce Federal revenues by $83 billion, and he had some very good answers, such as he said, "A rising tide raises all boats." And he stuck to his guns.[59]

According to Reagan, he faced a situation similar to that encountered by

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[3] Ronald Reagan gave 795 speeches containing 1695 allusions to past presidents. Of those allusions 223 were to Jefferson; 213 to JFK; 200 to Lincoln; 165 to FDR; 146 to Truman; 136 to Washington; 116 to Eisenhower; 96 to Carter; 66 to T. Roosevelt and Ford; 51 to Coolidge; and 36 to Madison. Other past presidents mentioned were LBJ, Nixon, Adams, Jackson, Wilson, W. Harrison, Grant, J.Q. Adams, McKinley, Hayes, Van Buren, B. Harrison, Harding, Hoover, Monroe, Cleveland, Taft, and Fillmore.

Kennedy and he would model his own behavior after Kennedy's. After all, few people remember John F. Kennedy as the champion of "voodoo economics."

In a similar manner, Reagan uses FDR as support in changing government focus from "regulation and government dictates" to one of "trust in ourselves and in each other." Consistent with FDR, Reagan stated that:

> But we have to give ourselves a chance. We have to have jobs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, when he spoke to a nation that was gripped by the economic woes of the Great Depression, "For more than three centuries we've been building on this continent a free society, a society in which the promise of the human spirit may find fulfillment. Comingled here," he said, "are the blood and genius of all the people of the world who have sought this promise."[60]

In invoking JFK and FDR in support of his policies and as similar in attitudes, Reagan provides an image of his presidency that many people argue contradicts the "real" meaning of those symbols. Whether or not there are incongruities, Reagan's use of FDR and JFK makes it difficult for his opponents to invoke those names effectively. For instance, Walter Mondale as heir apparent of the FDR legacy is not as effective if Ronald Reagan, who as president has the power of FDR and JFK, redefines the past for the American public.

Secondly, with the use of Jefferson, Lincoln, and Washington, Reagan portrays himself and his presidency as a continuation of the "hero-presidents". For instance, Reagan identifies himself with the essence of Jeffersonian democracy when he contends that:

> Thomas Jefferson wrote that "Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we would soon be wanting for bread." Well, figuratively speaking, I'm afraid that's exactly what's been happening. To return American to prosperity, we must call on the people at the local level, on the talent in our state legislatures, in our county seats, and our city halls. We must

respond to the needs and the dreams of our people, and you are the officials who know best in government what they are.[61]

With Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln, Reagan represents his presidency as consistent with the fundamental principles of American democracy regardless of what critics might suggest.

Thirdly, with the use of Eisenhower, T. Roosevelt, Lincoln, and Ford, Reagan establishes the partisan nature of his presidency with the respected, likable, and acceptable Republican presidents. For example Reagan stated that:

> Teddy Roosevelt said, "Far better it is to dare mighty things, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the grey twilight that knows not victory or defeat." Our opponents oppose our budget savings. They opposed our tax cuts. And they complain that all their special interests have been treated unfairly. Well, let them deny and oppose and complain, because we can remind the people--...--they're the last people who should be giving sermons about fairness and compassion.[62]

In his speeches, Ronald Reagan recognizes that he is leader of a political party and while the most recently elected Republican president does not effectively depict the party other past presidents do.

Finally, Reagan presents a relatively unique and obscure president, Calvin Coolidge, as a personal favorite which establishes a image that may be uniquely Reagan's. In an international radio broadcast, Reagan claimed that:

> A former President of the United States once said: "The chief ideal of the American people is idealism ...[in original] America is a nation of idealists." Well that's as true today as when President Calvin Coolidge spoke those words back in 1925.[63]

While Calvin Coolidge may not be remembered for his profound and eloquent thoughts, he provides Ronald Reagan with a Republican past president with whom

the public has little prior knowledge. Essentially, Reagan creates Calvin Coolidge for the American people and, of course, Coolidge supports Reagan. With each grouping of presidential names, Reagan communicates an image of his presidency for himself and his public.

Of course, presidential allusions may serve a variety of other purposes not directly related to the symbolic use discussed in this paper. Additionally, presidents do not write their own speeches. Perhaps in many instances, a president does not know who or why he is mentioning or quoting a former presidents. In those situations, the discourse is identified with the president and is spoken by him or issued in his name and so becomes publicly his. While factors other than symbolic considerations frequently account for the use of presidential names, the references still potentially create an image of a presidency. From this study, we add more detail for interpretation and provide an additional lens for understanding presidents, the presidency, and American political culture. After all, "we must think of rhetoric not in terms of some one particular address, but as a general body of identifications that owe their convincingness much more to trivial repetition and dull daily reinforcement than to exceptional rhetorical skill."[4]

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2. Lyndon B. Johnson, Public Papers of the Presidents: 1963-1964. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), 381.

3. Ronald Reagan, Public Papers of the Presidents: 1981. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), 466.

4. Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," The Interpretation of Cultures, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973), 453.

5. John Mack Faragher, Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), xiv-xv.

6. Theodore H. White, In Search of History: A Personal Adventure, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), 524-525.

7. This paper is based on a larger research project in which I examined all speeches by presidents containing allusions to past presidents from 1945-1988. Lyndon Johnson gave 602 speeches with allusions which constituted 36.8% of all speeches by Johnson. Ronald Reagan gave 795 speeches with allusions, 29.8% of his speeches; and John F. Kennedy gave 230 speeches with allusions, 29.8% of his speeches. Percentage-wise Richard Nixon was the fourth most frequent user of allusions with 242 speeches, 23.4%.

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11. Bruce Buchanan, The Presidential Experience: What the Office does to the Man, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), 56.

12. Clinton Rossiter, The American Presidency, Rev. Ed., (New York: New American Library, 1960), 111.

13. Rossiter, 102.

14. Richard N. Current, "The Lincoln Presidents," Presidential Studies Quarterly, 9, (1979), 25.

15. William E. Leuchtenburg, In the Shadow of FDR: From Harry Truman to Ronald Reagan, Rev. Ed., (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 239-240.

16. Leuchtenburg examines the many and varied influences of FDR on all the presidents succeeding him. Leuchtenburg also discusses the way the later presidents call on the name of FDR in their public statements. In addition to the Leuchtenburg book, see Thomas E. Cronin & W.R. Hockman, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the American Presidency," Presidential Studies Quarterly, 15, (1985), 277-286.

17. Michael Novak, Choosing our King: Powerful Symbols in Presidential Politics, (New York: MacMillian Publishing Company, 1974).

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19. W.W. Shannon discusses the notion of "hero presidents" in "Mr. Reagan goes to Washington: Teaching Exceptional America," Public Opinion, Dec/Jan, 1982, 13-17,58-60. Walter R. Fisher develops his idea of constituting the presidency in "Rhetorical Fiction and the Presidency," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 66 (1980), 119-126.

20. Barry Schwartz, George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol, (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 201.

21.Donald R. Kinder & Susan T. Fiske, "Presidents in the Public Mind," in Margaret G. Hermann (Ed.) Political Psychology, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986), 193-218. In a studying asking about public perception of past presidents, respondents focused on the general presidential role rather than recalling specific instances or actions. See Erick Herzik and Mary Dodson, "The President and Public Expectations: A Research Note," Presidential Studies Quarterly, 12, (1982), 168-173.

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23. Schwartz, 205.

24. Leuchtenburg, 99-100.

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25.Marcus Cunliffe, The Presidency, 3rd Ed., (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987), 70-76.

26. Current, 30.

27. Robert E. Denton, "On 'Becoming" President of the United States: The Interaction of the Office with the Office Holder," Presidential Studies Quarterly, 13, (1983), 373.

28. Denton, 375.

29. Current, 30-33.

30. Johnson, 1967, 177.

31. Doris A. Graber, Verbal Behavior and Politics, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 289.

32. Roderick P. Hart, "The Functions of Human Communication in the Maintenance of Public Values," in Carroll C. Arnold and John Waite Bowers, (Eds.) Handbook of Rhetorical and Communication Theory, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1984), 749-791. Hart provides a synthesis of the literature related to public rhetoric and values. The focus of the chapter is on "value-affirming moments" which Hart defines as "the special, sometimes stylized attempts to enforce a group's sacred truths and fundamental aspirations (for example, presidential inaugurals). Through the review of hundreds of studies, Hart emphasizes the inherent relationship of rhetoric and values.

33. For Kennedy, 113 speeches (49.3% of his speeches with allusions) were in ceremonial situations; for Johnson, 319 speeches (53.0% of his speeches with allusions) were in ceremonial situations; for Reagan ceremonial situations were second to briefing with 228 speeches (28.7% of his speeches with allusions).

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35. Reagan, 1981, 3.

36. Johnson, 1968, 290. Johnson statement is the introduction to his "Remarks Upon Presenting the Medal of Freedom to Robert S. McNamara", February 28, 1968.

37. Kennedy, 1961, 350. Toast to President Bourguiba, May 3, 1961.

38. Schwartz, 200-201.

39.For a discussion of the Democrats reaction to Reagan's use of FDR see: Charles D. Elder and Roger W. Cobb, The Political Use of Symbols, (New York: Longman, 1983), 76-79. Additionally, for Carter's reaction see Public Papers of the Presidents: 1980-1981, specifically speeches given in September and October.

40.Kennedy, 1962, 762-765. "Remarks at Fitzgerald Field House, University of Pittsburgh, October 12, 1962.

41. Johnson, 1966, 1151. "Remarks at Salisbury Park, Nassau County, Long Island." October 12, 1966.

42. Reagan, 1982, 1370. "Remarks at a Nebraska Republican Party Rally in Omaha," October 21, 1982.

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44. In his discussion of Carter and FDR, Leuchtenburg (1985, 177-208) comments on Carter's references to FDR in 1976 as being almost mechanical.

45. Kennedy, 1962, 22. "The President's News Conference of January 15, 1962.

46. Kennedy, 1962, 442. "Remarks to the White House Conference on Conservation," May 25, 1962.

47. Kennedy, 1963, 271. "Remarks at the University of Costa Rica in San Jose," March 20, 1963.

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49. Kennedy, 1962, 176. "Remarks at the 10th Annual Presidential Prayer Breakfast," March 1, 1962.

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52. Leuchtenburg, 123.

53. Johnson, 1964, 1292. "Remarks at the Municipal Park, South Gate, California," October 11, 1964.

54. Johnson, 1963, 62. "Address before the General Assembly of the United Nations," December 17, 1963.

55. Johnson, 1966, 518. "Remarks at a Democratic Party Dinner in Chicago," May 17, 1966.

56. H.W. Brandis, Jr., "Johnson and Eisenhower: The President, the Former President, and the War in Vietnam," Presidential Studies Quarterly, 15, (1985), 589-601.

57. Johnson, 1971, 18.

58. Leuchtenburg, 234-235.

59. Reagan, 1981, 468. "Remarks and a Question and Answer Session with State and Local Officials During a White House Briefing on the Program for Economic Recovery," May 28, 1981.

60. Reagan, 1981, 762. "Remarks on Presenting a Check for the Westway Highway Project to Mayor Edward I. Koch in New York, New York," September 7, 1981.

61. Reagan, 1981, 657. "Remarks about Federal Tax Reduction Legislation at a Meeting with State Legislators and Local Government Officials," July 23, 1981.

62. Reagan, 1983, 701. "Remarks at a Republican Fundraising Dinner for Congressional Campaign Committees," May 12, 1983.

63. Reagan, 1982, 2. "Remarks to the People of Foreign Nations on New Years Day," January 2, 1982.

64. Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), 26.